

SECTION 15.30: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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OSHA generally requires alternate methods be used to minimize or preclude the use of personal protective equipment by:

- **Engineering the hazard out.** This might include improving ventilation or changing machine design (guarding, etc.), or any method which physically removes the hazard from the worker. Substitution of less hazardous materials might also be included in this category. This is the most preferred method, and is in fact required in some specific standards, notably respiratory protection and noise control. Backup procedures may be needed to address situations where controls fail.
- **Administrative controls.** These would include rescheduling of work to eliminate or minimize exposure, a change in procedure, or related actions. This method carries a caution of enforcement. It may be effective, but care must be taken to assure procedures and controls are followed.
- **Personal protective equipment.** This method is the least desirable due to the complexity of OSHA requirements and associated costs to include exposure monitoring, training, equipment, administration, and program evaluation.

For compliance with personal protective equipment requirements, use the following approach:

- Define your operations in terms of equipment used, chemicals present or handled, noise, and the general environment in which the employees function. This may include review of material safety data sheets (MSDS) and/or environmental monitoring to determine severity or extent of potential problems.
- Focus on operations or specific tasks where controls are needed.
- Select a strategy and begin written program development based on regulations.

General Requirements of 29 CFR 1910 – Subpart I. (Overview)

Hazard assessment and equipment selection. (Required Section)

- The employer shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
NOTE: Non-mandatory Appendix B contains an example of procedures that would comply with the requirement for a hazard assessment.
- The employer shall verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed through a written certification that identifies the workplace evaluated; the person certifying that the evaluation has been performed; the date(s) of the hazard assessment; and, which identifies the document as a certification of hazard assessment.

Defective and damaged equipment.

- Defective or damaged personal protective equipment shall not be used.

Training.

- The employer shall provide training to each employee who is required by this section to use PPE. Each such employee shall be trained to know at least the following: when and where PPE is necessary; how to properly don, doff, adjust, and wear PPE; the limitations of the PPE; and, the proper care, maintenance, useful life and disposal of the PPE.

- Each affected employee shall demonstrate an understanding of the training specified above, and the ability to use the PPE properly, before being allowed to perform work requiring the use of PPE.
- When the employer has reason to believe that any affected employee who has already been trained does not have the understanding and skill required in the training, the employer shall retrain each such employee. Circumstances where retraining is required include, but are not limited to, situations where: changes in the workplace or the types of PPE render previous training obsolete; or inadequacies in an affected employee's knowledge or use of assigned PPE indicate that the employee has not retained the requisite understanding or skill.
- The employer shall verify that each affected employee has received and understood the required training through a written certification that contains the name of each employee trained, the date(s) of training, and that identifies the subject of the certification.